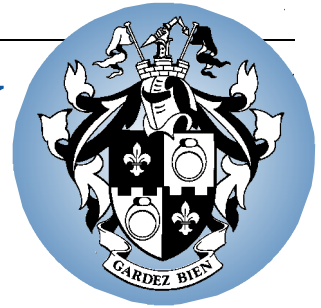


NEWS FROM

Your Montgomery County Council



Dear Neighbor:

When I was inaugurated as Council President in January, I pledged to you that this Council would do three things.

I said that we work for you and that our job was to make sure your County government was doing what it ought to do, the way you want it

done. First, our job is to make sure you get to have your say and, second, that whatever is done is done right — the first time. And I said we should take not one minute longer than we needed to get the job done — but, not one minute less.

Also, I said this Council would put the 200,000 children of our County first — because they are our future.

And, finally, I said we would pass a prudent budget that meets the critical needs of our communities — and includes

reductions in County income and property taxes.

The Council has acted favorably on these promises. Our new Council is making what's good about Montgomery even better — while tackling head-on the challenges we face as our County grows larger and more diverse.

Your County Council has just approved a \$2.4 billion budget for the fiscal year that started on July 1.

This budget reflects our values as a community. The Council said we would make our children a priority with our "Children First Initiative." We've done just that. We are spending nearly \$20 million to reduce class size for our kids.

We are expanding our "Montgomery Babies" pilot program with a goal to insure that every child born in this County gets a healthy start. The award-winning Sharp Street program, a citizen initiative that keeps at-risk youth suspended from school off the streets and helps to get them back

on the right track, is also being expanded.

We are doubling our spending on ballfields — which means 500 more games can be scheduled every week for all segments of our communities.

And there is more... more library hours, more support for working parents, and more child protection workers to help kids in jeopardy, more youth service officers, and more prosecutors to go after child abusers.

But this budget does not stop with our children.

This budget will help to alleviate some traffic congestion by boosting mass transit and upgrading County roads and intersections — so we can spend less time getting where we are going and more time with our families, while still preserving the green spaces we all cherish.

This budget strengthens our County's ability to keep our strong economy growing and match working people with the jobs of tomorrow. We are boosting our efforts to attract and retain quality jobs.

The budget the County Council approved does all this while providing tax relief and spending \$4 million less than the recommendations from the County Executive. We also increased our reserves by \$12.9 million. This balanced approach has yielded a budget that all Montgomery County residents can be proud of.

It's not the role of our government to raise our families. What government can do is establish an environment and lend a helping hand so that every Montgomery County resident can realize his or her own potential. It's all about opportunity for all.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Isiah Leggett".

Isiah Leggett
County Council President

"This budget reflects our values as a community."



Council's "Children First Initiative" makes a difference

It's all about the kids...

Look around. One out every four Montgomery County residents is under the age of 18. We all want every child to be healthy, safe, and secure at home, at school, and in the community. We want them to get a top-flight education. We want them to be fully prepared to be responsible, contributing members of society.

That's why your County Council decided to make "How can we help our children?" the very first question we ask over the next four years. That's what the "Children First Initiative" is all about — taking a hard look at what we do now, getting more "bang for the buck" with existing resources, and filling in the gap with new initiatives. Highlights include:

- **Class size.** The Council approved nearly \$20 million to reduce class sizes. That means accelerating the elementary school reading initiative in grades 1 and 2 in classes limited to 15 students. It means a maximum limit of 20 students in all Algebra 1 classes in grade 9. And it'll pay for 49 additional teachers to begin eliminating the 2.6 percent of oversized elementary classes.
- **More dollars for education.** The Council approved \$1,004,460,200 for the Montgomery County Schools, which totals over 48 percent of the County's aggregate operating budget. That's an increase of 6.3 percent over last year and represents 99.5 percent of the School Board's request.
- **Air conditioning.** Help is on the way to make sure the recent heat wave in our schools is the last. The Council took the initiative and approved \$7.4 million to air condition all remaining Montgomery County schools as soon as the school system can get it done.
- **School facilities.** Funding is included for additions at Eastern Middle School, Magruder High School, and Wootton High School, as well as a new school gymnasium at Burnt Mills Elementary and a new Northwest Elementary School #6.
- **More ballfields.** The Council doubled spending on ballfields to \$6 million. Lighting 7 fields, renovations, and reconfigurations will mean space for 500 more games and practices every week. And that's in addition to the new fields approved by the Council with construction of the Soccerplex in Germantown.
- **Healthy Babies.** The Council approved \$188,000 to expand on the Montgomery Babies pilot program to insure that all babies born in Montgomery County get a healthy start.
- **Straightening out troubled youth.** The County will spend \$250,000 to expand the successful Sharp Street Program, a cooperative project between the County and communities based in local churches and synagogues to engage and turn around troubled youth suspended from school. Another \$59,000 will go to the Rosemary Hills Youth Program in Silver Spring, working with at-risk youth through intensive mentoring and community safety programs. There's more funding for more Youth Services Investigation officers, educational services at the Noyes Juvenile Detention Center and job training for at-risk youth.
- **Protecting vulnerable kids.** Reinforcements are on the way to ease the bulging caseloads of our hard-working child welfare workers. Reports of child abuse and neglect in the County have risen 27 percent since 1997. The Council approved \$1.5 million to fund 22 additional child welfare workers. There'll be \$100,310 for more attorneys in the State's Attorney's office to handle family violence and child welfare cases. The Council approved funding to improve our juvenile justice and child welfare information systems. \$430,000 will expand the Healthy Families program for at-risk, first-time parents.
- **Mental health.** The Council approved \$526,000 to keep open the Silver Spring Children's Mental Health Clinic and additional funding for teen alcohol prevention.
- **Help for Poor Children.** The Council approved \$212,000 more for day care subsidies for needy working parents and \$178,500 for activities for children living in Housing Opportunities Commission housing.



"By doubling our funding for ballfields, an extra 500 games and practices a week can be played on County fields."

— Councilmember Steve Silverman (At-Large)



"More money for my Montgomery Babies initiative means every child born in our County will have the healthy start he or she deserves."

— Councilmember Marilyn Praisner (East County)



"Every other County facility and nearly all private sector workplaces have air-conditioning. Our teachers and children deserve no less."

— Councilmember Michael Subin (At-Large)

BUDGET 2000:

A Balanced Approach Pays Off...



"This Council has shown its commitment to revitalizing our aging neighborhoods and making sure Silver Spring redevelopment goes forward."

— Councilmember Derick Berlage (Silver Spring, Takoma Park, Wheaton, Kensington)



"By lowering health insurance premiums for County workers and retirees, we've saved County taxpayers \$4 million."

— Councilmember Phil Andrews (Rockville, Gaithersburg, North Potomac, Derwood, Washington Grove)

Montgomery County is already a good place to live, raise a family, and earn a living. The Montgomery County Council took what's good and made it better — with a budget that balances preserving our County's quality of life while keeping faith with County residents by providing tax relief.

Budget initiatives by the Council (not including child-related items — see accompanying article) include:

- **Economic development.** The Council approved \$775,000 for programs to bolster economic development in the County — \$500,000 to create a one-stop "Montgomery Works" career center to match employees who have needed skills with employers, \$200,000 for a public-private Montgomery Business Alliance partnership to attract companies to the County, and \$75,000 for the Montgomery Work/Life Alliance to promote family-friendly policies and programs on the job. An additional \$285,000 was allocated to initiate an innovative public/private partnership to promote information technology advances in the County.
- **Public Safety.** The Council approved over \$258 million for Public Safety, an increase of 6 percent over the previous year. Highlights include funding for a new Police sub-station in Montgomery Village/Gaithersburg as a transition to a sixth police district, including full funding to staff a dedicated dispatch line for the district. Funds are also included to begin a major initiative to clear old warrants and improve service of new warrants. The replacement of Sandy Spring fire station #4 will be accelerated by two years.
- **Neighborhood Preservation.** The Council approved adding \$1 million to the Montgomery Housing Initiative to preserve affordable housing stock and rehabilitate deteriorated multi-family properties in targeted areas.
- **Recreation Facilities.** Construction of the new indoor Germantown Swim Center will be completed in 2001, complementing the Council's approval of the Soccerplex and other public facilities in South Germantown Park. Also, the completion of the Martin Luther King Swim Center Phase II Outdoor Pool will be moved up two years, and completion of the Damascus Community Recreation Center will come one year earlier. \$3.2 million is budgeted for parklands acquisition.
- **Road improvements.** The Council accelerated by one year the widening of Shady Grove Road to six lanes between Briardale Drive and Muncaster Mill and adding a sidewalk along its entire length. Also, safety improvements on Muncaster Mill Road and the widening of Briggs Chaney Road east of US 29 will be done one year ahead of schedule. \$300,000 will go to re-stripe roads to increase lane capacity. The budget also includes intersection improvements at Crabbs Branch at Needwood Road, Montgomery Village Avenue and Christopher and Midcounty Highway, and Great Seneca Highway at Sam Eig and Muddy Branch Road. Included in the budget is \$310,000 requested by the County Executive for "traffic calming" measures — including speed humps — to be used according to new, more limited criteria adopted by the Council.

continued on next page

Check out your County Council on the Web... and on the TV

WorldWide Web at "www.co.mo.md.us/council".

On County Cable Channel 55 (for cable-ready, Channel 5) you'll find full broadcasts of every County Council session, plus many public hearings, neighborhood Town Hall meetings, and other programs.

Check out the Channel 55 broadcast schedule on the Council Website or consult the inside back page of your Washington Post weekly TV magazine.

For information on Montgomery County Council and the issues that affect you and your family check out the Council on the

A Balanced Approach Pays Off...

continued from previous page

- **Higher Education.** Montgomery College will receive \$109 million, a 13 percent increase. An expanded Takoma Park campus is in the works as well as a 4-year curriculum in conjunction with the University of Maryland.
- **Libraries.** The Council approved \$50,000 to study the feasibility and needs for a new Silver Spring Library, along with an additional \$100,000 in planning funds for a new Rockville library. The Council also added four hours of Sunday service at four community libraries, and expanded service at the Poolesville Library.
- **Mass Transit.** The Council appropriated \$175,000 for a "Super Fare Share" program in the Bethesda area to encourage employers and their employees to utilize mass transit and also approved \$250,000 for expanded late-night bus service.
- **Montgomery's New Communities.** The Council approved funds to plan a "New Americans Welcome Center" to help new Americans with integration into the life of the County. They approved an additional \$75,000 for Casa de Maryland for housing, employment and training programs, \$19,500 more for Consejo Latino, and added \$85,000 for Proyecto de Salud to deliver health care to uninsured adults. They also funded \$20,000 for the League of Korean Americans health fair and \$20,000 more for the Korean American Association language program.
- **Service to the Community.** The Council approved \$50,000 for Food & Friends' home-delivered meals and food delivery for people with AIDS, \$50,000 in matching funds for Mobile Medical Care, \$45,000 for the Senior Interfaith Resource Center, \$75,000 in additional funds for the "Dentures for Senior Citizens" program, and \$10,000 for Hospice Caring for training of volunteers.
- **The Arts.** The Council approved planning and design funds for a concert hall that would be built adjacent to Strathmore Hall in Rockville. Overall, the Council significantly increased funding for County arts groups.



We've got new numbers...

That's right — all your favorite Montgomery County government agencies have new telephone numbers.

Clip and save these most-requested numbers. . .

The Montgomery County Council 240-777-7900

fax 240-777-7989

Animal control	301-279-1823
Building permits	240-777-6200
Bus schedules	240-777-RIDE
Business licenses	240-777-9460
Child care	301-279-1773
Circuit Court	240-777-9466
Community Use of Public Facilities	240-777-2706
Consumer complaints	240-777-3636
County Executive	240-777-2500
Crisis Hotline (24 hours)	301-315-4000
Emergency Police, Fire & Rescue	Dial 911
General County Information	240-777-1000
Land records	240-777-9477
Library telephone reference	240-777-0001
Parking violations	240-777-8960
Parks	301-495-2525
Pet licenses	301-279-1095
Police (non-emergency)	240-279-8000
Property tax information	240-777-8950
Rat complaints	240-777-3986
Recreation programs	240-777-6804
Recycling information	240-777-6400
Register of Wills	240-777-9600
Schools information	301-279-3391
Trash collection	240-777-6410
Voter registration (24 hours)	240-777-VOTE

NEWS FROM Your Montgomery County Council

Isiah Leggett,
Council President

Michael Subin,
Council Vice President

Councilmembers
Phil Andrews

Derick Berlage
Nancy Dacek

Blair Ewing

Betty Ann Krahnke

Marilyn Praisner

Steven Silverman

Editor: Patrick Lacefield
Design: Jeff Jones

100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20853
240-777-7900

e-mail:
county.council@
co.mo.md.us

County Council Says "NO" To ICC, "YES" To Quicker, Cheaper, More Effective Alternative

Montgomery County residents want to spend less time on the road and more time with their families. We want traffic congestion relief that makes sense, will actually make a difference, can be done now, and doesn't cost an arm and a leg.

That's why the Montgomery County Council recently reaffirmed its support for an extensive "Network of Improvements" that would combine major road and intersection

improvements with enhanced mass transit options, while opposing the billion-dollar InterCounty Connector superhighway — which even ICC supporters say will not significantly relieve congestion on I-270, I-95, or the Beltway.

"The InterCounty Connector is the ultimate example of wishful thinking," said Councilmember Derick Berlage. "The Council's alternative can help us now, at less cost."

"There are lots of things we can do to help with traffic congestion," offered Councilmember Nancy Dacek. "The ICC isn't one of them and it's never going to be built."

The Council also called on Governor Glendening to stop state purchases of land along alternative ICC alignments.

"Those northern alignments hang over us like a dark cloud, leaving longstanding communities and homeowners in limbo," stated Councilmember Marilyn Praisner.

Mixed-Paper Recycling Coming to Montgomery County

Thanks to a new contract recently approved by the Montgomery County Council, you'll soon be able to recycle your junk mail and other assorted waste paper — in addition to the cans, bottles, and newspapers you recycle now.

The County Council, with the support of the environmental community and the County Solid Waste Advisory Committee, rejected an initial proposal from the County Executive.

The improved contract, approved by a 5-4 vote, would allow mixed-paper recycling as early as January 2000. It lowers the minimum tonnage the County guarantees to deliver from 115,000 tons annually to a more realistic 90,000 tons. It sets a fixed-cost to the County of \$15 a ton, as opposed to the estimated \$23 a ton cost estimated for the old contract, saving the taxpayers \$6 million. Those Councilmembers who voted against the new contract remained concerned that the cost to taxpayers may be too high.

Council Delivers Tax Cuts

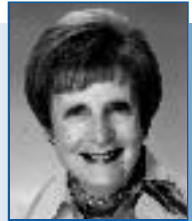
The Council budget includes \$18.5 million in tax cuts this year for Montgomery County families, including reductions in the County income and property taxes and a reduction to zero of the tax on wireless telephones.

"When times are good and basic needs are met, we should give money back to our hard-working Montgomery families," said Council President Isiah Leggett.

Over the past five years, the County Council has initiated over 80 percent of the \$203.5 million in County tax relief. The Council cut the energy tax in half, saving taxpayers nearly \$110 million over five years. The Council reduced and then repealed the bottle tax, saving \$40.4 million, and also saved taxpayers \$3 million by reducing the telephone tax. Last year, the Council initiated a \$50 property tax rebate, saving homeowners another \$11.1 million. The homeowners property tax credit, which saved \$1.2 million in its first year, also was initiated by the Council.

Income tax savings are \$7 million, rising to \$23 million annually in three years. Property tax savings are \$9 million a year, and cell phone tax savings \$3 million a year.

Also, the Council held the line on water and sewer rates with no increase for the second straight year.



"Building a Western Bypass highway through our agricultural reserve may be good for Virginia, but it's bad for our Montgomery County communities."

— Councilmember Nancy Dacek (Up-County)



"It was important to keep open the Silver Spring Children's Mental Health Center so that children will get the help they need and not end up on waiting lists or without service."

— Councilmember Blair Ewing (At-Large)



"Taxpayers deserve relief. We asked them to help in hard times. Now, it's payback time."

— Councilmember Betty Ann Krahne (Potomac, Bethesda, Chevy Chase)